

Bridgeport Bridge

Score: 64



Documentation

Builder

A bronze plaque on Bridgeport Bridge states that it was erected in 1934 by the Kitchener Suburban Roads Commission. D.J. Emery, the Waterloo County Road Superintendent, was the designer and commissioned engineer of this bridge. He designed many of the County bridges during the 1930s and '40s. The building contract for the concrete work was awarded to Storms Contracting Co. Ltd., Toronto. Bridgeport Bridge was built during the Great Depression as part of a public works project to give work to the unemployed. The bridge cost a total of \$65,600.74, of which \$14,137.83 was subsidized by the Government in the form of relief labour.³⁵ The construction of this bridge is not mentioned in the Waterloo County Minutes.

Age

Bridgeport Bridge was built in 1934. It is a depression-era bridge.

Technology

Materials

The bridge is constructed of reinforced concrete, a popular building material of the time.

Design/Style

This is a five-span, concrete, bowstring bridge. It is similar to the Freeport Bridge and Main Street Bridge. This type of bridge was built mostly during the first third of the 20th Century. It is a good example of the period, which saw a move away from steel truss to concrete truss bridges. It represents a newer material use but an older engineering design. By the early 1930s, there was both a newer design-- the rigid frame bridge--and the use of the newer material. It was designed to hold urban traffic.

Prototype

The Bridgeport Bridge is a copy of the Freeport Bridge, with five spans instead of seven.

Structural Integrity

The Bridgeport Bridge has been resurfaced, patched and repaired over the course of its lifetime, but no significant modifications to the structure have been made.

Bridge Aesthetics and Environment

Visual Appeal

Bridgeport Bridge is one of the most attractive bridges in Waterloo Region. It is contoured and smooth, with five equally-spaced arches. It is especially impressive at night when automobile headlights flicker against the stringers and portions of its giant curves.

³⁵D.J. Emery, *County Engineer and Road Superintendent's Report*, 1934, p. 21.

Integrity

Bridgeport Bridge has remained at its original location. It has a high degree of integrity.

Landmark

Bridgeport Bridge is well known locally as a distinctive bridge and is certainly one of the older bridges in the City.

Gateway

Bridgeport remains an important access point into Kitchener as the only crossing of the Grand River between Conestogo and Victoria Street.

Character contribution

The Bridgeport Bridge contributed to the formative years of Waterloo Township. Originally Bridgeport was a town larger than Waterloo, but now it is a suburb of Kitchener.

Historical Association

Bridgeport is located on the northern limits of Kitchener. The residents incorporated the Village in 1952, and its reeve sat on Waterloo County Council until 1972. The community then became a part of Kitchener.

In 1836, John Wissler erected a wire suspension bridge over the Grand River at Bridgeport. He built this foot bridge to reach his tannery, which was located on an island nearby.³⁶ Sometime after, this bridge fell into the river. The local boys were blamed because they swung on it so much. Afterwards, two wooden bridges were built between the island and the mainland. These bridges were replaced in 1897 by a two-span steel truss bridge and a smaller pony truss bridge. The larger of the two bridges spanned the Grand River and was built nearby and built by the Hamilton Bridge Works Company. The pony truss bridge spanned the High Water Channel.

The steel bridges were replaced in 1934 by the bowstring bridge. It was designed by D.J. Emery, the Waterloo County Road Superintendent. The Storms Contracting Co. Ltd., near Brantford built the bridge for a total cost of \$65,600.74. In order to excavate the island, D.J. Emery had to purchase 1.75 acres of land below the bridge from Mr. A. Anderson. The purchase included the island below the bridge, the playground immediately southeast of the bridge, and a small wooden booth on one of the lots. Mr. Anderson refused to sell the island alone, and the County was forced to buy the whole parcel and divide the land in two. Bridgeport Bridge has survived the raging floods of 1948 and Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

Bridge Group

There are four bowstring bridges in the surrounding area. Two are in Kitchener, the Bridgeport and Freeport bridges and the other two are in Cambridge and Caledonia, respectively. These bridges were built between the Great wars.

³⁶ *WHS*, 1939, p. 65.

Bridgeport Bridge

Location MTO Site No. 33-84, Bridge Street, 0.08 km east of Lancaster Street, City of Kitchener.

General Information

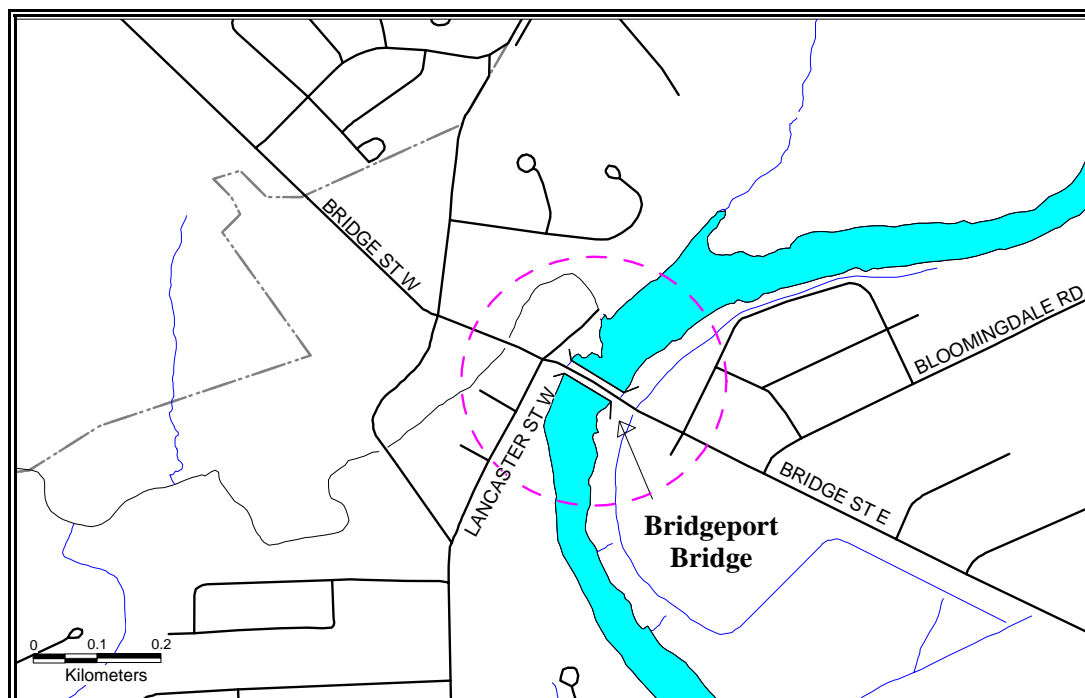
<i>Bridge No.</i>	005201
<i>Jurisdiction</i>	Regional Municipality of Waterloo
<i>Year built</i>	1934
<i>Drawings</i>	Regional HQ

Physical Components

<i>Type</i>	Concrete Bowstring
<i>Spans</i>	5
<i>Dimensions</i>	Length 126 m Each span 25.1 m Width 10.7 m
<i>Load Limit</i>	None posted

Descriptive details

This is a five-span, concrete bowstring arch bridge, with a concrete deck and concrete wearing surface. Each span has a length of 25.1 m which spans a total distance of 126 m, with a deck width of 10.7 m, over the Grand River in the north end of Kitchener. This bridge has recently been designated as a heritage structure, listed on the City of Kitchener Heritage Inventory. It possesses concrete balustrade handrails.



Bridgeport Bridge

South View



North West View



Bridgeport Bridge Bibliography

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